



Darting from above

## KWS undertakes mammoth elephant translocation

The Kenya Wildlife Service recently translocated nine family groups of elephants and nine individual bulls from Sweetwaters Rhino Sanctuary to Meru National Park in July 2001. This was the largest elephant number to be translocated in one operation in either eastern, western and central Africa.

Elephant numbers in most range states have continued to show an upward trend following the international ban on ivory trade and enhanced security. Alongside increasing elephant numbers is the increasing human population that brings with it a high demand for land, both for settlement and other economic activities. Consequently, habitats are being fragmented, leading to compression of elephant ranges and emergence of isolated elephant habitats, resulting in increased human-elephant conflicts. This poses two major challenges: the need to protect the elephant on the one hand and the need to protect human life and property on the other.

In order to mitigate the conflicts and conserve the elephant, KWS has initiated a number of

long term management options. Fencing has been the most important, but this has tended to create ecological islands leading to habitat degradation. This option is only practical for isolated elephant populations in relatively confined elephant ranges; however, this method cannot always be applied because of the costs involved and the vastness of the areas affected. Translocation has been adopted as a medium term strategy to manage problem elephants and confined animals under Problem Animal Control (PAC) strategy. Because of the number of animals involved and those lost under PAC, KWS has shifted its policy away from the method and adopted translocation as an alternative management option whilst other long term strategies are being pursued. The translocation was carried out to:

- Reduce the impact of elephants on vegetation as a result of high densities. The entire Laikipia ecosystem has about 2,400 elephants with Sweetwaters alone having 125 elephants in an area of 90 sq. kms. These densities are beyond the carrying capacity of the sanctuary.
- Reduce human-elephant conflict in the surrounding area by translocating identified problem elephants. This was in response to a call for help from the communities. KWS would like, if possible, people and wildlife to



The KWS Capture team attempt to load a 40 year old, four ton Mr V into a truck for translocation to Meru.

live in harmony. In addition, people who have wildlife living on their land should benefit economically.

Restock the Meru elephant population. Meru once accommodated over 2,400 individual elephants which were greatly reduced by poaching in the 60s and 70s, to the extent that only 300 elephants remained.

Northern Kenya has great potential for future development and KWS would like to open up the area to tourism which would make the wildlife population more sustainable. This would also help to alleviate poverty, by creating employment and providing markets for farmers and souvenir sellers.

The Elephant Programme - a unit that is charged with overseeing elephant issues within KWS fundraised for the operation in which Ksh 10.5 million was spent. The operation was carried out by KWS personnel with assistance from the Kenya Army, which provided two low loader trucks to transport the elephants together with personnel. The exercise was funded by a number of donors including the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) who contributed US\$ 40,000, the Born Free Foundation who gave US\$12,500, Save the elephants who gave US\$ 3,900, Ol Pejeta Ranching who gave US\$3,000 and The Humane Society of USA who contributed US\$4,500. In addition to supplying personnel and equipment KWS also utilized two aircraft at a cost of US\$51,000 in flying time.

In an endeavour to ease pressure and minimize human-elephant conflict, KWS has translocated a total of 109 elephants from 1996 to date:

In 1996, 26 elephants were translocated from Mwea National Reserve to Tsavo East National Park to help reduce human-wildlife conflict. For the last five years there

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# Message From The Director



KWS management is pleased to bring you yet another issue of KWS News outlining some of the organisation's recent activities. KWS continues to pursue its conservation mandate while enhancing job security for all its employees.

KWS also continues to work on donor support and relations. Donor confidence is growing with improved management of our own generated revenues and donor funds. We are working towards KWS' sustainability by bridging the budget deficit and creating a business culture and programmes that are conservation sensitive. We have recently created the Corporate Affairs and Business Development department and the Central Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

We aim to promote respect and recognition of community stakeholdership by advancing, strengthening and institutionalising sustainable community wildlife service. Already, several community based conservation programmes e.g sanctuaries, ecotourism projects, etc. are being established across the country. In these areas we continue to focus on resolving human - wildlife conflict while encouraging conservation of biodiversity.

Among recent achievements are the following:

- (i) reduced trophy poaching levels.
- (ii) eliminated cases of attacks on tourists in parks and reserves.
- (iii) sustaining quality wildlife habitats in protected areas.
- (iv) maintaining a good road network in parks and KWS managed reserves.
- (v) maintaining access roads to key parks.
- (vi) integration of conservation programmes within KWS and into local and national development agenda.
- (vii) creation of harmonious environment between members of the public and wildlife management.
- (viii) Downsizing of KWS departments from 12

to 7 to increase efficient application of resources.

- (ix) rebuilt and enhanced the Wildlife Capture Unit to strengthen the conservation of wildlife and resolve human wildlife conflict.
- (x) rehabilitated and built new field operating centres and staff accommodation.
- (xi) provision of national and international wildlife conservation leadership e.g. in rhino, elephant and community conservation.
- (xii) maintaining a well-groomed and disciplined workforce.
- (xiii) creation of team-spirit within the staff.
- (xiv) reduction in pilferage of KWS resources.
- (xv) allowing staff to rationally utilise their full potential.
- (xvi) timely payment of staff salaries.
- (xvii) transparent recruitment, promotion and disciplinary machinery.
- (xviii) Trained some 200 members of staff, locally and abroad.

For the first time in its existence, KWS staff have collaborated to produce our own corporate five-year Strategic Plan. Similarly, KWS has courageously undertaken evaluations of:

- pilot wildlife cropping scheme.
- bird shooting and community involvement.
- crocodiles and their impacts on people outside parks and reserves.

KWS administration has demonstrated recognition and appreciation of Kenyan talent and has recruited competent Kenyans to offices previously manned by consultants. We have created linkages between KWS professionals with international agencies, colleagues and conventions, thus boosting confidence among KWS' own workforce and the international fraternity. Kenyan expertise has been demonstrated through effective and successful handling of sensitive and complex tasks. KWS professionals have been called upon to assist other African countries to help in resolving conservation agenda.

We are institutionalising various KWS management systems, reviewing policies and legislation and developing long-term strategies and programmes to form the basis for conservation in Kenya. With a sound Strategic Plan we expect to make an appreciable contribution to national development while aiming to be a leader in national and international wildlife conservation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nehemiah K. Rotich".

Nehemiah K. Rotich, MBS

# Plastic surgery on plastic waste

Trial operations have begun on a project that could turn around Kenya's plastic waste pollution crisis.

The KWS pilot project is based in Naivasha, and involves converting waste plastics and polythene into posts that can be used in construction work. Nearly 300 such posts have already been used in a 28 km stretch of electric fence bordering Aberdares National Park, as part of the on going KWS project to minimize human/wildlife conflict in the conservation area.

The pioneering project, though not exclusive in principle, has a real potential to relieve the country from the choking waste paper pollution and a looming timber crisis.

KWS acquired this project courtesy of Rhino Ark, who have been actively involved in conservation projects in the Aberdares. Through the money raised from the annual 'Rhino Charge', the trust bought the facility and donated it to KWS. A Naivasha couple, Mike and Sarah Higgins, volunteered to run it on an experimental basis on their farm. They are active fundraisers for the Rhino Charge and prominent Naivasha farmers, actively involved in the Lake Naivasha Riparian Association, which last year won the Ramsar award of excellence. Ramsar is an international convention which seeks to promote wise use of important wetlands; Lake Naivasha is the second Ramsar site in Kenya and the hub of a horticultural industry, a heavy user of polythenes.

The process involves collection of waste plastics, from low density polythenes to plastic pipes and containers. With no cleaning whatsoever (a marked departure from other plastic recycling operations), they are fed into a machine, milled into small flakes, then melted inside a second machine. From there the product is pumped into a mould where the molten plastic is compressed under pressure, after which it is inserted into cold water to compact, before being forcefully ejected as a post.

The current posts, 10 feet long and 6 inches wide, are still experimental and the

By Ndung'u Njaga

biggest challenge is to make them firm, as they are still bending under pressure. Mr Higgins is consulting with other plastic industries with a view to solving the problem.

KWS has used 280 of these posts and has found them convenient because, unlike wooden ones, they offer automatic insulation. According to George Odhiambo, Works Superintendent at the Aberdare park, bending of these posts may not be an immediate problem because animals are repelled by electric power and not necessarily the strength of the post.

The only challenge with such posts, according to Mr Odhiambo, is along vertical bends, as they tend to bend under pressure from the electric wire. This they are countering by erecting strain assembly kits at every corner and using wooden posts every 100 metres. Mr Odhiambo said the posts are also likely to be more effective in controlling baboons which are a major cause of human/wildlife conflict and which the conventional electric fence has been unable to confine. The baboons easily manoeuvre their way along the wooden posts by shrewdly avoiding the live wires. In plastic posts, they are shortchanged in that the posts are smooth, thin and uniform.

Besides potential use in electric fencing, the project could revolutionize the timber industry. After witnessing the first pilot installations of the posts in the Aberdares in April, KWS Director, Nehemiah Rotich described the project as "one of the most challenging environmental initiatives launched in East Africa".

According to the Higgins', many consumer outlets such as supermarkets and hotels, are already making inquiries, eager to dispose of their plastic waste at no cost. So are horticultural farms around the country, which are likely to be key beneficiaries, being heavy users of polythene for their green houses. These polythenes have a short life span and the



Waste plastic bags collected from Naivasha area are fed into an agglomerator. Under heat and use of water the waste disintegrates into 'flakes' and is ready for the extruding process which follows.

code of conduct for the Kenya Flower Council forbids disposal through burning. And since they cannot be effectively disposed of by burying - they are non biodegradable - many flower farms are saddled with unmanageable loads. Others expressing interest in the project are Nairobi based garbage collection entrepreneurs, who are eager to 'juakalinize' the technology to make it widely available.

However, the project is seeking assistance from donors to acquire a machine with higher speed and capacity to make it a more feasible commercial undertaking. Currently the Higgins' estimate one post to cost Ksh 400, which may not be competitive against wooden poles. This high cost is due to having to generate power with a generator, owing to the unreliability of electric power, as the machine is very sensitive to sudden power disconnections.

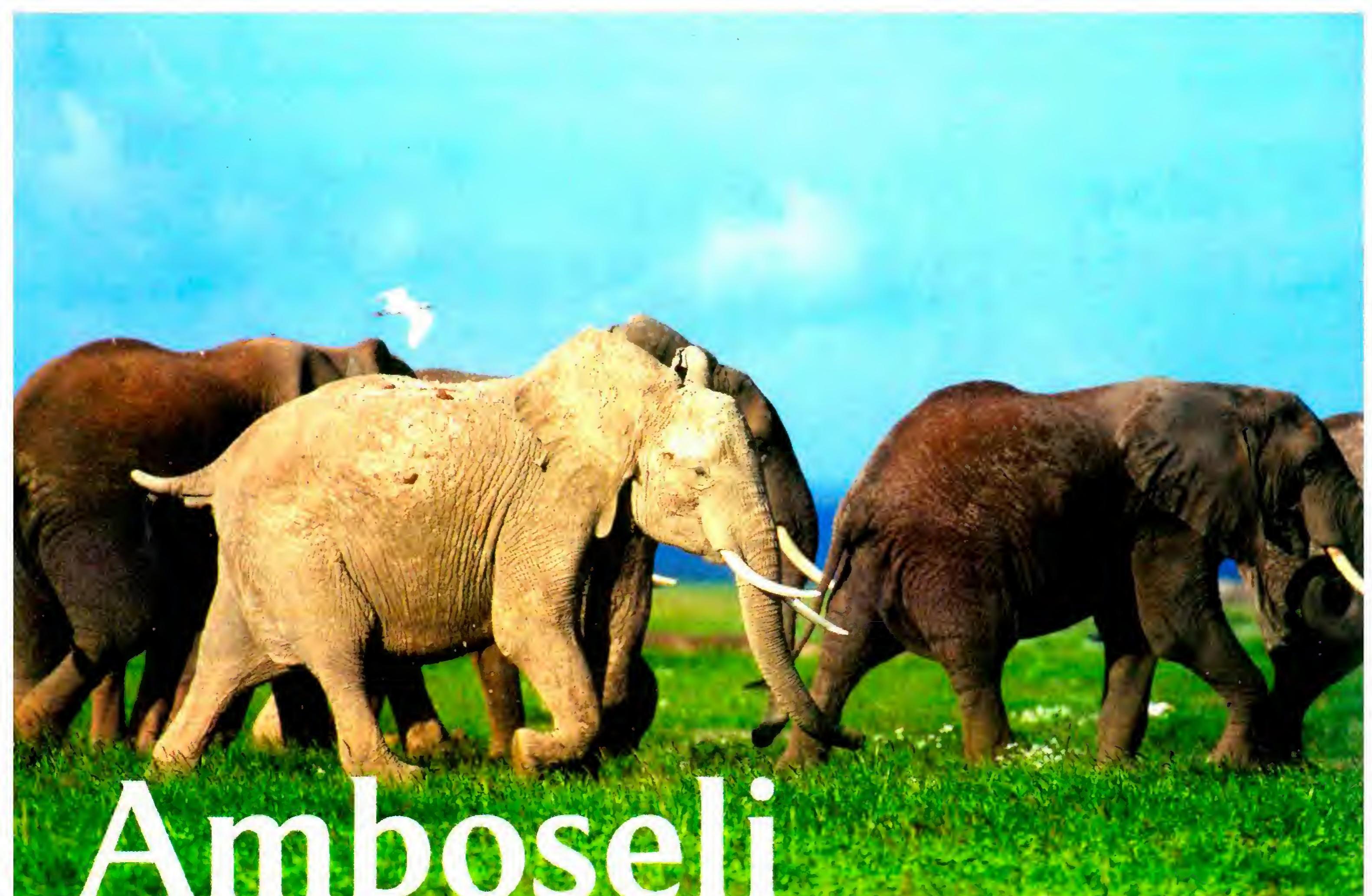
The Rhino Ark, KWS and the Higgins' invite any inquiries, suggestions and assistance from donors, plastic engineers and others on how to bring this project to its fullest potential.

For more information contact:

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# Amboseli

## – too small for its wildlife?

"This is paradise", exclaimed an English lady who was visiting Amboseli National Park for the first time. The middle aged woman had spent her entire afternoon on a game drive in the 393 sq km area, currently the most visited park in Kenya.

Amboseli is home to most popular game, including 56 animal species, 400 bird species and 1,100 elephants that roam the expansive Amboseli ecosystem. To cap it all, Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain, can be viewed at close range.

During the tourism boom of the early 1990s, Amboseli recorded an average of 220,000 visitors per year. It is estimated that the park nets an annual revenue of Ksh 150 million from its current 77,000 arrivals per year. However, its popularity, coupled with its small area, are Amboseli's undoing. According to Mr Michael Kipkeu, the senior warden in charge of the park, the number of annual visitors is leading to overcrowding and is detrimental to the ecosystem.

The rush by tour guides to trace the 'Big Five' has been a major worry to park managers. To discourage overcrowding, KWS is encouraging group ranches adjacent to the park to start ecotourism adventures to ease pressure on the small park. These group ranches have borne the brunt of the spill-over effect of wildlife, as many animals live on their land. As a result, the group ranches of Kimana-Tikondo, Imbirikani, Olgulului, Lolarrashi and Eselenkei are approaching investors to set up tented campsites and other ventures that will earn them revenue.

However, its popularity, coupled with its small area, are Amboseli's undoing.

Already Kimana has clinched a 10 year agreement with a tour operator to use its sanctuary at a fee of Ksh 7.5 million per year, while Eselenkei has reserved 5,000 acres for a conservancy. An investor has put up a tented camp and is paying the group ranch Ksh 400,000 per year. "Wildlife will soon be the economic mainstay of pastoralists because livestock production has become an unreliable mode of sustenance", said Mr Joseph Miaron, the co-ordinator of the Amboseli/Tsavo Group Ranches Conservation Association. His opinion is shared by the executive director of Pastoralist Development Education Programme (PADEP), Mr Daniel Somoire. "Wildlife is our coffee and tea," he said. "We are happy that KWS is facilitating initiation of ventures that will enable local people to directly benefit from tourism."

Amboseli wildlife almost entirely relies on group ranches, as the park is too small even to cater for the pasture requirements of its 1,100 elephants. The park has recorded an unprecedented degradation in the past few years, attributed to various factors. One theory has it that the level of salinity has risen, thereby causing havoc to the vegetation. Another theory blames the elephants who have been destroying vegetation in the park, especially the trees.

KWS, together with Amboseli Serena Lodge, has

fenced off some areas with the aim of establishing whether wildlife is to blame for the park degradation. Surprisingly, all the fenced off areas have had speedy regeneration of vegetation and become home to some shy animals. "The Amboseli vegetation will only be saved if the elephants are assured of a bigger home range", said Michael Kipkeu.

During the dry season, pastoralists graze their big herds of livestock in the park in order to use reliable water sources in the swamps. This adds to the pressure on the fragile ecosystem. Grazing is a sensitive issue. In 1970 the government convinced the Maasai to vacate the park before it was gazetted in 1974, by promising to provide water outside the park so that the community would not have to go into the protected area to water their livestock. Many water projects were initiated as a result of the agreement, but not all have been implemented.

So far the pastoralists have no objection to the elephants having their freedom, but their stand is not shared by the agro-pastoralists who feel aggrieved whenever the jumbos ravage their farm-land. John Makau, a resident of Inkariak Rongena is bitter. He invested a lot in farming but harvested nothing one year, as the elephants reaped where they did not sow. "We will succeed as farmers only after KWS erects a live fence in the race to keep off elephants", he said.

Fences have worked miracles elsewhere. In Namelok area, 101 farmers belonging to group ranches, are now tilling 253 acres of land without fear of elephants, due to a 61 km fence that runs through the group ranches.

The main concern of KWS is to ensure that pastoralists realise the optimum benefits from their conservation efforts. Through Conservation through Enterprise (CORE), KWS, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has spelt out an ambitious programme that seeks to empower economically, the people living around the Amboseli park. The programme will increase community capacity to conserve and manage wildlife resources; facilitate active and mutually beneficial partnerships between local communities and the private sector; and establish and promote wildlife related enterprises through training and the establishment of an enterprise development fund.

Among the key implementers of the CORE programme are KWS, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), East African Wildlife Society, African Conservation Centre, Pact Incorporated and Pricewaterhouse Coopers. AWF, in conjunction with KWS, is helping pastoralists who lose livestock through wildlife attacks.



# DONOR news

## RHINO CHARGE RAISES OVER KSH 16 MILLION

The Rhino Charge 2001 held in June at Lekuruki Group Ranch in Samburu raised a record of Ksh16.8 million, which will be used to continue building the fence encircling the Aberdares National Park Fence and to establish a trust fund for the permanent maintenance of the fence, said Mr. Colin Church, Chairman Rhino Ark. The Rhino Ark has been involved in the Aberdares fencing programme since 1989 and so far a total of 120 km of fencing has been erected. Rhino Ark hope to complete a total of 160 km by year 2002. This will be half of the total circumference of the fence alignment around Kenya's largest mountain range which totals 320 km.



Left to right: Colin Church, Chairman Rhino Ark, Dan Onsembe Warden Aberdares, KWS Chairman, Charles Njonjo and Speaker of National Assembly, Mr. Ole Kaparo holding the cheque at the prize giving on Lekuruki Group Ranch, Laikipia/ Samburu District.

## DAVID SHELDICK WILDLIFE TRUST

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust donated, in the 1999/2000 financial year, over six million shillings to KWS divided up into the following projects in Tsavo East National Park:

- |                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| • Fuel for security vehicles | Ksh3,246,676 |
| • Hydrogeological survey     | Ksh 300,815  |
| • Boreholes, Ndara and Aruba | Ksh1,000,000 |
| • Ndara windmill             | Ksh 570,000  |
| • Aruba windmill             | Ksh 761,132  |
| • Kone Windmill              | Ksh 286,070  |
| • Tipper repairs             | Ksh 67,360   |

KWS is forever grateful to its donors for their support.

# Wildlife Cropping – is it the best way?

The debate on wildlife utilisation produces fierce divergence in the conservation fraternity over private appropriation of wildlife products as a conservation principle. The debate pits animal welfare groups and a section of private citizens against wildlife farmers, the latter managing wildlife on their farm for economic returns.

At stake are millions of shillings that potentially accrue from sport hunting and the sale of wildlife products. This position claims wide support amongst liberal, utilitarian academics who insist wildlife must have an economic value, in order to compete with other land uses. Without this, wildlife will perish, as land owners will have no incentive to tolerate wildlife on their farms.

This 'Use it or Lose it' concept has been aggressively promoted. Proponents have constantly accused the Kenya government of conservatism, for banning sport hunting of wildlife over three decades ago and in effect denying the country a huge economic potential.

Ten years ago Kenya Wildlife Service allowed experimental cropping of wildlife on private farms with the principal aim of seeing if this would reduce wildlife related costs. The programme, called Pilot Wildlife Cropping Project, was borne of the need to protect wildlife outside national parks leading to the formation of the Community Wildlife Service in KWS. The unit was charged with exploring possibilities of 'wise use' of wildlife as an incentive to conserve it outside protected areas and minimise its cost to communities. The pilot project started in the four districts of Machakos, Kajiado, Nakuru and Laikipia.

The project has always been mired in controversy, as it was started without an exhaustive legal, scientific and administrative framework, causing mis-

trust between KWS and land owners. Against this background the current KWS Director, Mr Nehemiah Rotich, has called for an independent assessment of the project's impact as a basis for future direction. The findings of both local and international evaluators were presented recently at a national symposium. It is clear that emotions could rise, as KWS discusses recommendations from the report which will, necessarily, aggrieve either party.

The bone of contention is the philosophy that says that wildlife cropping for private profits is a conservation ideology. Animal welfare groups believe it is immoral to subject animals to such methods in pursuit of profits for a minority of citizens. This view is fortified by many others who argue that wildlife is a national resource which justifies its conservation even for its own sake. They further argue that to grant cropping rights to ranchers is to entrench a historical injustice, through which a few individuals became owners of large tracts of land.

The cropping proponents, however, insist that wildlife is an economic asset and must be subject to economic principles if it is to survive. An international consultant gave a comparative review of history and wildlife trends in Kenya compared with the Southern Africa states of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and advocated an overhaul of national laws to allow private ownership, manage-

ment and exploitation of wildlife outside national parks. He cited lack of this as the reason behind wildlife decline and cautioned that wildlife in Kenya will decline dramatically should laws continue to restrict private ownership.

Slightly in agreement with their international counterpart, the local consultants lamented that while the stated national policy advocates both consumptive and non-consumptive utilization of wildlife, the operational policies are biased towards non-consumptive utilisation. They further noted disharmony between clauses that control cropping and the use of wildlife products. Neither is the Wildlife Act and Cruelty Act clear on cropping policy. This restrictive and inexplicit legal system was reported to have resulted in a lack of long term investment by land owners, butcheries and tanneries, such that the project is perceived to have so far failed to adequately reduce wildlife costs and to produce markets for wildlife. The failure of markets to evolve has been punitive to land owners who reap only two per cent from the market value of an animal, while up to eighty per cent goes to the eateries who retail game meat, thus making wildlife uneconomical to farmers. The capacity of KWS to implement and monitor the cropping was in doubt and the consultants painted a gloomy picture of the outcome by showing that wildlife in all the trial districts, except Kajiado,

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# KWS People



KWS Chairman, Charles Njonjo (left), Director Nehemiah Rotich (centre) and Deputy Director, Abdul Bashir, all in a jolly mood at Ithumba in Tsavo East, during the opening ceremony of Ithumba park headquarters. The project was funded by Care for the Wild International of the United Kingdom.



These two women from Waruini Community of Laikipia, Catherine Wamuyu (left) and Margaret Wanjiru help in the construction of a fence to keep away wildlife on Ol Pejeta Ranch. This is a KWS/Community venture to combat human/wildlife conflict. Communities are also trained in fence maintenance.



KWS Director Nehemiah Rotich (second left) presents a trophy to a graduate at the Passing Out Parade in Manyani Field Training School, where 128 Rangers graduated. Deputy Director, Abdul Bashir (left), looks on.



One of the KWS Vet Unit rescue teams attends to a 'patient' in Amboseli National Park. In the picture Dr Adeela Sayyid handles a highly delicate case of elephant injury as Sgt Joseph Koech (right) examines a decaying portion of the intestine. (Picture by Patrick Omondi.)

Kinoshita Fumio, the JICA Wildlife and Conservation Advisor has left KWS after five years in Kenya. Mr Fumio, (or Fumio as he was known to most of us) came to Kenya in March 1996 from his last position in Zambia. During his time here he facilitated grant aid to KWS in excess of Ksh 20 million, some of which went towards multimedia equipment which has enabled KWS to produce news and wildlife materials for use by educational centres.



## Continued from page 6

has declined steadily. The question is - is it because or in spite of cropping? The consultants were unable to answer. Also of concern, said the consultants, was the fact that even species not listed for cropping, like the endangered Grevy's zebra and some giraffe, were recording negative growth, suggesting indiscriminate cropping by the land owners, or other factors at play, or both.

Now that wildlife outside the protected areas is declining, even with experimental cropping, what next? According to the international consultant, even in South

African countries where laws are more liberal in favour of wildlife ownership, cropping is an insignificant source of revenue compared to activities like sport hunting. He argues further that the solution is to open up the regulating edifice so that farmers can seek alternatives, that avail optimum benefits. Most liberal academics support this thesis which, nevertheless faces stiff opposition from a wide spectrum of interest groups. The debate continues.

Ndung'u Njaga  
KWS Communications



# 4 year old Nelly shows her appreciation



The Director KWS, Mr Nehemiah Rotich (right) and with Dr John Waithaka, Manager BCP at the Imenti Solar Fence launch with young Nelly Karambu (4 years old) who thrilled audiences with a poem.

*KWS Director Rotich, Donor; Wageni waheshimiwa, wana kamati, mabibi na mabwana.*

*Jina langu ni Nelly Karambu, Nina umri wa miaka minne, Naishi na nyanya. Gakurine karibu na msitu Tunakuza mahindi, maharagwe, na ndizi katika Shamba letu ndogo. Ndovu wanapenda sana kula mahindi, maharagwe na ndizi kutoka kwa shamba letu ndogo. Wanakula kila kitu na tunakosa usingizi.*

*Ahsante Director Rotich na Donor Dr Waithaka Kwa kutuletea ua la ndovu. Sasa tutafurahia mahindi yetu, maharagwe na ndizi. Tatalala bila wasiwasi na nitaweza kwenda shule.*

*Ahsante Ahsante Ahsante na Mungu ambariki.*

Recited by Nelly Karambu, aged 4 on the occasion of the opening of the Imenti forest Solar Fence.

For non Swahili readers the poem briefly translates:

*I live near the forest. We grow maize, beans and bananas on our farm. But elephants love to eat these things as well. They eat everything and we have no food. Thank you for the fence which will protect us from the elephants. Now we can eat our crops, sleep well, and I can go to school.*

*Continued from page 1*

## elephant translocation

There have been no reports of incidents of deaths and injuries caused by elephants around Mwea National Reserve.

In 1997, 10 bulls were translocated from Lewa Downs to Kora National Park. These bulls had sought refuge on the private ranch during the poaching era of the 60s and 70s causing pressure on the already overcrowded vegetation. This translocation also helped to build up the Kora elephant population, wiped out by poachers in the 70s.

In 1999, 30 bulls were translocated from Mwaluganje to Tsavo East National Park in order to reduce pressure on vegetation resulting from a concentration of bulls in the area. The translocation also helped to reduce the high level of human-elephant conflict in the area and to build up the elephant population in Tsavo which had been reduced from 35,000 elephants in the 70s to 5,000 elephants in the late 80s.

In April 2000, 10 elephants were moved from Ol Pejeta and Lewa Downs to Meru National Park in order to reduce human-elephant conflict. In the same year, three bulls were moved from Shimba Hills to Tsavo East National Park to help re-stock Tsavo and reduce human-wildlife conflict surrounding the Reserve.

In February 2001, KWS successfully assisted the Uganda Wildlife Authority to translocate problem elephants from the Luweero District to Murchison Falls National Park. KWS aims to reduce wildlife management related costs to the rural communities. To this end, KWS has formulated conflict resolution guidelines which recognise the need for dialogue with communities. KWS is in the process of forming conflict resolution committees at village levels which will work hand in hand with KWS officers in the overall goal of conservation. In addition, KWS has erected electric fences in various parts of the country covering a distance of 1000 km;

animal moats have been tried at Limuru and Narok; and elephant drives from areas of conflict to National Parks or Reserves have been undertaken. Translocation of animals from areas of conflict to areas of less conflict is part of our broader wildlife conservation and management strategy of resolving human-wildlife conflict and we work closely with the communities in addressing wildlife matters.

KWS faces a number of challenges, the greatest being the degradation of wildlife habitat through opening up savannah for agriculture. Also, the receding of our wetlands due to human economic activities and the blockage of animal movement routes through settlements, agriculture and other areas of competing land use, are other challenges to KWS. KWS has received tremendous support from the general public, especially during last year's drought and the organisation looks forward to working with various groups to address conservation and management issues.

## Imenti Community Solar Fence Launched

In June this year the KWS Director Mr Nehemiah Rotich attended the launch of an important community project in the Meru region - the Imenti Solar Fence.

The 30 km fence is the result of a joint undertaking between the Community Development Trust Fund (CDTF), the Imenti community and the Kenya Wildlife Service. Imenti forest is an important part of the ecology, history and culture of the Meru area and is home to a large variety of wild animals. It is also adjacent to many small farms and unfortunately for the people of the area, many of their farms are destroyed by elephants who use Imenti, and thus the surrounding area, as a feeding ground. This is a major cause of conflict between the local people and the wildlife.

In an effort to solve the conflict the three partners in the project have contributed a joint total of Ksh 13 million (over Ksh 10 million was donated by CDTF) to construct this solar powered electric fence around the forest, with the help of the KWS fencing unit. During the construction KWS will train the community fence committee on the administrative requirements for sustaining the fence, as well as giving technical guidance. In addition the community has identified 10 trainees who will be trained by KWS during the construction. The Director, Mr Rotich, commented that, "Kenya Wildlife Service fully recognises the need for communities to be empowered so as to effectively manage the project after construction".

KWS, with the help of partners



The Director KWS, Mr Nehemiah Rotich (right) and Chairman, Board CDTF Board of Trustees Mr Peter Makanu at the launch of Imenti Community Solar Fence.

in the development field has so far erected 1000km of fences throughout Kenya. According to Mr Rotich plans are underway to extend the fencing initiatives to Northern Aberdares, Mt Elgon Park, Arabuko Sokoke Forest and Meru National Park. "Where fences are not feasible", he added, "other conflict resolution strategies will be applied". The Director also said that KWS is working closely with the Office of the President and the Treasury to address compensation issues for human injury or death caused by wildlife.